

ticed with the systems described in this specification and accompanying drawings.

For example, a host may stand in front of a map of the world. He or she poses the question "In which country is the river to which I am pointing located?" For purposes of this illustration, the audio portion of the question is referred to herein as a "module question", and normally a program comprises many such module questions. The object of formulating module questions is to be able easily and economically to substitute such module questions for each other in the same show, which normally is taped prior to airing. Such a module question, consisting of the audio portion of the question can easily and economically be replaced by another audio portion, while the more costly video portion (the host pointing to a map) remains the same.

In such a modified method, a part of all of a question or task presented in a program in one time zone, are differentiated and are different from the corresponding question or task asked in a similar program aired in another time one. This is achieved by formulating at least a part of a question or task in interchangeable module form.

Either an entire question may be substituted in a program, or a part of a question may be substituted. If only a part of a question is to be substituted, such part can for instance be a part or all of only the video portion of a question. Normally, such interchangeable module questions will be of approximately the same length, so as not to affect the overall length of a program.

If a program comprises a merchandising portion and a game or quiz show portion, the part of the show consisting of questions or tasks may be produced and taped separately and independently of the other portions of the show. Many forms of implementation of this method may be devised. The example given below is illustrative of only one of the alternative methods which achieve the above mentioned object.

According to a preferred method, a plurality of sets of different tasks is formulated, using one set of tasks in one time zone and another set of tasks in another time zone. Although the tasks may differ in their entirety, a preferred method is described wherein the tasks differ only with respect to their audio portion.

In the taping of the show, the video portion is the same in all tapes, irrespective of the time zone in which such program is to be aired or transmitted by cable. The audio and video portions together, or only the audio portion, form a question or task. The audio portions of module questions change from one such program to the next. Thus the host is seen in all versions of the show to be pointing to the same map.

He or she will, however, tape a plurality of oral module questions, only one of these module questions being used in any one time zone. With reference to the above example, in which a host points to a map of the world, another module question may be "What is the name of the river?" Yet another such module question by the host may be "Is the river to which I am pointing among the five longest rivers in the world?"

The above described example involves the same host asking a set of questions, each of which questions must be taped in its entirety. This necessitates the involvement of the host in asking a set of successive oral questions, while the video portion remains the same. In another version of this preferred method, the module questions, that is the audio portions of each question, are asked by an off-camera announcer. This method has the

advantage that in the taping of the show, the host spends only sufficient time in front of the camera to ask one question, the host providing such action in front of the camera as is required to make the oral module question asked by the off-camera announcer intelligible. Thus, the host may silently point to an object, such as a map, for a length of time permitting an off-camera announcer to pose one module question. Other module questions asked by the off-camera announcer and accompanying the same video portion showing the host, are dubbed or inserted into the appropriate part of the tape. In the taping of a show containing a quiz segment and intended to be aired in four time zones, an off-camera announcer therefore asks four sets of module questions, one set of these oral questions being inserted into the appropriate place in each of the four program tapes used in transmitting the show in the four time zones.

Yet another example of a simplified and economical version of the above methods may entail a projection of a scene or the filming of an object without a host being present. The object could be a well-known personality, or a picture of such personality; or an action shot of such personality may be used. An off-camera announcer may ask a number of oral or module questions to meet the requirements of the number of shows to be shown in different time zones.

The foregoing examples in the use of the invention show that the system and methodology of the invention are adaptable to the needs of marketing organizations. A supplier of televised home shopping services is able to strike an appropriate balance between time allotted to merchandising and to quiz segments respectively, so as to optimize viewer response and enhance the quality of audience participation.

In the practice of the invention, the dispenser (FIG. 8) and its printer 390 can be used to output a card 362 in the form of an admission ticket, for example, as for standing room at a concert, or to a museum exhibition or other event. This is a form of award which is employed readily by a recipient of the award, and is immediately available for use by the recipient. As such, this form of award encourages people to participate in a televised merchandising event.

It is noted also that the connection, in FIG. 8, of the dispenser 360 to the program memory 330 via the logic unit 370 permits the program conductor, or host, at the central station to transmit command signals to the memory 330 for activating the dispenser at each remote location to dispense a printout announcing a special award to accompany a subsequent task irrespective of any award having been won. Such an announcement heightens excitement and encourages people to participate in a televised merchandising event.

By way of further embodiment to the invention, it is noted that the tape 364 (FIGS. 6 and 8) outputted by the dispenser 360 of the response unit 310 may be imprinted with a bar code, as portrayed in FIG. 6. The bar code may be read by a scanner 404. The reading of the scanner 404 may be transmitted to a receiver 406 at the central station 202 via modems 408 and 410 connected to the telephone circuit 280.

It is to be understood that the above described embodiments of the invention are illustrative only, and that modifications thereof may occur to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, this invention is not to be regarded as limited to the embodiments disclosed herein, but is to be limited only as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is: